

TEXAS OPTOMETRY BOARD

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION FROM THE TEXAS OPTOMETRY BOARD OFFICE DECEMBER 21, 2020

On December 18, 2020, the Texas Optometry Board convened an emergency meeting and passed an emergency rule related to the COVID-19 pandemic and license expiration dates.

Pursuant to Emergency Rule, 22 TAC 273.15 Emergency Extension of a License Due to COVID-19, for any renewable license with an original expiration date of December 31, 2020, the Board shall issue an emergency extension of the expiration date under Texas Occupations Code §351.302 for the same activity as the expiring original license. An emergency extension issued under this section shall begin on the original license expiration date. Emergency extensions shall expire on the date the Board issues a final determination on a renewal application for the original license, or 90 days from the original license expiration date, whichever is earlier.

TOB staff members have been plagued with COVID-19 cases during the renewal season. This extra time allows staff to process the renewal applications while allowing qualified optometrists to continue working and ensures continuity of care for patients.

TOB will not issue licenses with the emergency extension date. An online list will be posted weekly to the TOB Home Page. Anyone needing verification or authorization for an emergency extension should refer to the list.

Finally, please note:

- Emergency extensions ONLY apply to those not renewed as of 12/31/20.
- You must pay the renewal fee and submit all CE prior to 12/31/20.
- All CE must be completed in 2020.
- All renewed licenses will expire on either December 31, 2021 or December 31, 2022.

273.15 Emergency extension of a license due to COVID-19.

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(b) Emergency extensions shall be granted to a license holder who has initiated the renewal process prior to December 31, 2020, including payment of the renewal fee and submission of continuing education documentation.